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THE
UNITED STATES MAGAZINE,
AND
DEMOCRATIC REVIEW.

VOL. XVII.

NOVEMBER, 1845.

No. LXXXIX.

THE
EDINBURGH AND FOREIGN QUARTERLY ON THE OREGON.

SINCE the article in our June number on the Oregon question, two of the British Quarterly Reviews have contained articles on the same subject, which may be regarded as expressions of the views of the two parties into which the people of Great Britain are divided. The *Edinburgh* reasons in a liberal spirit; and though it leans to the British side, thinks, nevertheless, that there may be some justice on ours, and counsels moderation. The *Foreign Quarterly* is insane in its hatred of America and everything American, sees nothing in our claims but unfounded pretensions, and appears to think that nothing more is needed than British threats to frighten us into an abandonment of them.

Neither of these articles in itself would be entitled to much consideration; but they are to be treated differently. The *Edinburgh* is moderate, and should be answered with reasons; the *Foreign Quarterly* is too furious to be reasoned with, if its braggart tone did not place it beyond the pale of argument.

Perhaps our readers would like to see the latest arguments of the English in a condensed form. We will give them, therefore, a summary of the argument of the *Edinburgh*, passing over all that part of the article which does not relate strictly to the disputed question.

It begins with assuming that sovereignty over an unoccupied country may be acquired by five different means; discovery, settlement, contiguity, treaty, and prescription; and it

lays down the preliminary proposition, that the acts by which the sovereignty is acquired must be the acts of a government, not of unauthorized individuals.

As to *discovery*: it admits that the title of Spain, so far as that could give it, was complete, and it rejects the claims arising from discovery of both the English and Americans. As to our claim to the country of the Columbia, founded upon the discovery of the river, it gives three reasons for rejecting it: first, that Gray was not actually the first discoverer; second, that if he were, he was but a private individual; and third, that the discovery of a river gives no title to the country drained by it; three reasons any one of which would be sufficient, if it were well founded.

As to *settlement*: it rejects equally the claims of America, of England, and of Spain, on the ground that all the settlements, small and partial at best, were the unauthorized acts of private individuals, up to the time of the Convention of 1818, since which no act of either America or England can have affected the title.

As to *treaty*: it admits that the Convention of the Escorial ought to be deemed a temporary arrangement, and that either nation has the right to terminate it, as it has the right to terminate the Convention of 1818. Then it insists that our claim, founded on purchase from Spain, is sophistical, for the reason, as we understand it, that we ceded to Spain the territory below 42, to which we had no title, and,

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therefore, could, under the same treaty, take no title from Spain to the territory north of that parallel; a reason the force of which we acknowledge ourselves unable to perceive.

Prescription it considers inapplicable to a case so recent; and as to *contiguity*, while it insists that neither America nor England can claim a perfect title by contiguity, it nevertheless admits that each has an imperfect title from that source to the portion of Oregon which adjoins its own frontier; America to that south of the 49th parallel, and England to the rest.

Upon the whole, it maintains that the dispute is one eminently proper to be adjusted by arbitration, and thinks that an honest arbitrator would divide the territory by the 49th parallel, giving, however, the whole of Vancouver's Island to England.

Such is a very brief summary of the argument of the *Edinburgh*. Our readers will perceive that it makes no claim upon the pretended discoveries of Drake, and that it abandons what we considered the strongest ground of the English claim, the Convention of the Escorial. Its other positions, viz., the denial of the priority of Gray's discovery, the denial of right acquired from discovery or settlement by private persons, and the denial that the discovery of a river gives a claim to the territory which it waters, demand some notice from us.

First, as to the priority of Gray's discovery. His only competitor is Heceta. The existence of the great river of the west was matter of tradition and of general belief long before his time. Who first actually discovered it is the question. To have seen the coast where the river empties itself was not enough; that must have been done by all who coasted along the shore. To constitute a discovery of the river, it was necessary either to enter it or to see it, knowing it to be a river. Heceta's account of what he saw is as follows:

"In the evening of this day, I discovered a large bay, to which I gave the name of *Assumption Bay*, and of which a plan will be found in this journal. Its latitude and longitude are determined according to the most exact means afforded by theory and practice.

"The latitudes of the two most prominent capes of this bay, especially of the

northern one, are calculated from the observations of this day.

"Having arrived opposite this bay at six in the evening, and placed the ship nearly midway between the two capes, I sounded, and found bottom in twenty-four *brazas*; the currents and eddies were so strong that, notwithstanding a press of sail, it was difficult to get out clear of the northern cape, towards which the current ran, though its direction was eastward, in consequence of the tide being at flood.

"These currents and eddies of the water caused me to believe that the place is the mouth of some great river, or of some passage to another sea.

"Had I been certain of the latitude of this bay, from my observations of the same day, I might easily have believed it to be the passage discovered by Juan de Fuca, in 1592, which is placed on the charts between the 47th and the 48th degrees, where I am certain that no such strait exists; because I anchored on the 14th of July, midway between these two latitudes, and carefully examined everything around.

"Notwithstanding the great difference between the position of this bay and the passage mentioned by De Fuca, I have little difficulty in conceiving that they may be the same, having observed equal or greater differences in the latitudes of other capes and ports on this coast, as I shall show at its proper time; and in all cases the latitudes thus assigned are higher than the real ones.

"I did not enter and anchor in this port, which in my plan I suppose to be formed by an island, notwithstanding my strong desire to do so; because, having consulted the second captain, Don Juan Perez, and the pilot, Don Christoval Revilla, they insisted that I ought not to attempt it, as, if we let go the anchor, we should not have men enough to get it up, and to attend to the other operations which would be thereby rendered necessary. Considering this, and also that, in order to reach the anchorage, I should be obliged to lower my long boat (the only boat I had), and to man it with at least fourteen of the crew, as I could not manage with fewer, and also that it was then late in the day, I resolved to put out; and at the distance of three or four leagues I lay to. In the course of that night I experienced heavy currents to the south-east, which made it impossible for me to enter the bay on the following morning, as I was far to leeward.

"These currents, however, convinced me that a great quantity of water rushed from this bay on the ebb of the tide.

"The two capes which I name in my plan Cape San Roque and Cape Frondosa, lie in the angle of ten degrees of the

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It will be seen from this account that Heceta did not enter the river; that his actual position was far outside the bar, in twenty-four fathoms of water; and there is no evidence that he even saw the opening of the land through which the river issues. All that he himself says, is, that the currents and eddies led him to *believe* that the place was "the mouth of some great river or of some passage to another sea." This was not seeing the river or entering it. It was a belief in its existence produced by the phenomena which he observed.

The two next are questions of international law. According to that law, does a discovery or settlement of an unoccupied territory by private individuals give any right whatever to the government or nation to which the individuals owe allegiance? We maintain that it does, and that this necessarily follows from the doctrine of allegiance and protection. Every citizen of this country who goes abroad on any lawful undertaking, goes as an American citizen, and is entitled to the protection of his government. If he enters the jurisdiction of another government, he submits himself to that for the time being; but so long as he remains out of another jurisdiction, this government should not permit another to touch him. What follows? That American citizens settling in any unoccupied country, not under another jurisdiction, are as much subject to the jurisdiction and government of their own country as if they were at home, and are equally entitled to its protection. Rights and duties are correlative. The new country having to be defended by the original government of its settlers, may be governed by it also. And the rule that obtains in respect to settlements by American citizens, must obtain also in respect to discovery, which is but preparatory to settlement.

The doctrine of the English leads to this; that a nation cannot communicate its authority, except in particular cases. Now it must be admitted that any nation may give its sanction in what manner and to whom it pleases. It may commission a few officers to

make discoveries and settlements in its name, and by its authority; or it may authorize all its citizens to discover and settle new countries; or it may declare that it adopts any discovery and settlement made by any of its citizens. If the sanction of the government is all that is wanted, we do not see why it may not be given afterwards as well as beforehand.

The remaining point is the extent of claim accruing from the discovery of the mouth of a river. It is to be observed at the outset, that the article in the *Edinburgh* does not state the claim itself with exactness. The ground taken by us is, that the *discovery* of a river is deemed a discovery of its course and branches, and of the country drained by it. Then we contend that from discovery flows the right of occupancy within a reasonable time.

What is discovery? Is it the actual sight of all the land or water within the limit? If it were so, the view of one side of a mountain would not be a discovery of the other, or one side of a bay the discovery of the opposite side. According to this, a discoverer might have sailed hundreds of miles along the northern shores of the Amazon without acquiring the rights of a discoverer in its southern shores, or any greater portion of the river than he actually saw. Now, so far from this being the received doctrine, it was pushed rather to the opposite extreme, and, on one occasion, so far that the Spaniards laid claim to the Pacific, from the discovery by Balboa at Panama.

In reason as well as in fact, the discovery of one part of a river must be deemed a discovery of the rest: for it gives a clue to the rest, and it is impossible to apportion it without leading to the most whimsical confusion.

This is as far as we need to go. If we had any title to the country of the Columbia by discovery, it has not been lost through the settlements of other nations; for, in point of fact, there have been no such settlements on any of the waters of that river prior to ours.

But we could go further, and extend the same principle to actual settlement. The settlement is subsequent and auxiliary to the discovery; it perfects the title, otherwise imperfect. A

settlement at the mouth of a river extends its jurisdiction over the upper country, unless some part of that country has been already settled or discovered by another.

How is this doctrine of public law to be established? By the practice of the nations concerned in the discovery and settlement of the New World. Before the opening of the great Columbian Continent to the eyes of Europe, there was no occasion for the establishment of any rule on the subject; but when the ambition and cupidity of the maritime nations of Europe strove to obtain as much as possible of the new-found hemisphere, some rules of partition, some foundation for their relative rights, became indispensable. The western shore of the Atlantic was the scene of their enterprizes. How broad lay the continent before them they little knew. When they landed on the coasts, they took possession, as of the country to its westernmost limits. The first who reached the mouth of a river had found an opening into the land. The rivers were the gates of the interior; they who possessed themselves of these gates conceived that they held good against all comers whatever lay within. And thus it happened that, without exception, so far as is now known, the possession of the mouth of a river was considered a title as against other European nations to all the country which lay above it, and was approachable through it; in other words, to all the country which its waters washed in their whole course.

Thus the French, taking possession of the mouth of the St. Lawrence, claimed the country to the north and west; and although the Spaniards actually first discovered the mouth of the Mississippi, yet they were met in their ascent by the French, descending from the Ohio and the Upper Mississippi, whither they had crossed from the head waters of the St. Lawrence; and these titles of the French and Spaniards had the effect to contract the titles of the English colonies, which before had claimed to the South Sea.

It was said by the British negotiators, in 1818, and has been repeated by their journalists since, that our different titles are inconsistent with each other. What if they are inconsistent?

Does that weaken our claim, or make the British a better one? There may be different claims to the same territory, of more or less strength; none of them perfect. Take for example, the case of the claim by discovery, the claim by occupancy, and the claim by contiguity, held by different governments. If any one of these governments can by treaty unite them all in itself, it strengthens its title, and it does so because it thus furnishes an answer to its adversaries. One may prefer the first title, another may maintain that the second is the best. Neither of them can be demonstrated to be perfect; but the purchase of all the titles silences all the objectors. It is so in private affairs. A land-owner purchases in an outstanding claim against his estate, to quiet his title. He does not thereby admit the title purchased to be good, or his own previous one to be bad. You cannot destroy both his titles by asserting that the two are inconsistent with each other. His answer will be, "tell me which title you consider good, and I will show you that I have it." It is puerile then for any Englishman, diplomatist or journalist, to disparage our titles as inconsistent with each other. They are a source of strength, not an evidence of weakness.

In regard to the line of partition which the *Edinburgh* recommends, we have not much to say. We have already expressed the opinion in our former article, that the offer of the 49th parallel, which our government formerly made, was a reasonable and proper compromise, and the southernmost which we ought to concede. Our government has twice offered that line, and the English Government has as often rejected it. We would not repeat the offer, after two refusals. But at the same time we are free to say, that if England were to offer us that line without more delay, so as to put an end at once to the disquietude, which the very agitation of the matter occasions, we would accept it. We are not insensible to the objections that have been made to such a compromise, and we know very well that the state of irritation towards England which prevails among us, particularly at the west, disinclines a great body of our countrymen to make any terms with

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her. But strong as are these objections and this feeling, we think they are outweighed by the considerations which favor an immediate settlement of the question, on the basis of some compromise. It is not the case of a proprietor giving up territory which belongs to him by an undisputed and indisputable title. We believe our title to the whole to be good—that to the part south of 49° to be the best—but we cannot reasonably assume that Great Britain is not sincere in her claim also. We think it unfounded, but it is not indisputably so. How are these claims of two great nations to the same territory, each being sincere in its claim, to be adjusted? By compromise, by arbitration or by war. We are less disposed to arbitrament than to compromise, for the reasons given in the former number. War is the last resort when all others fail. We would compromise sooner than go to war; though we would go to war sooner than submit to a dishonorable compromise. As to Vancouver's Island, it should belong wholly to America. England has now almost a monopoly of islands. The rest of Oregon is not important to us. With Vancouver's Island, and the country south of the 49th parallel, we hold the keys of the Pacific.

Thus we believe we have answered all the arguments of the *Edinburgh*, which make against the positions that we have heretofore maintained, in this *Review*. One other observation of the reviewer must not escape us; that in which he sneers at the "ignorance of international law, which is the glaring defect of American statesmen." This is rather a remarkable observation for a Scotchman to make, seeing that neither Scotland nor England has yet produced any work of authority on international law, nor shown any particular aptitude for such studies, whether among its statesmen or lawyers, and that the observation is made of a country which has numbered Franklin, Adams, Jefferson, Jay, Gallatin and Webster among its statesmen and diplomatists, and now boasts of the best living writer on international law. It should seem to be impossible for Englishmen or Scotchmen, however fair in general, to finish any discussion concerning America, without a sneer at her. We do not care to retaliate on

the *Edinburgh*. If we did, we should ask it to point to any English statesman, eminently instructed in the law of nations; and if it could point to one, we should then refer to the history of English diplomacy and war, as to a history of infractions of that code.

The *Foreign Quarterly*, as we have already observed, puts itself, by its insane scurrility, out of the pale of argument. It gives us slanders for reasons. To pronounce its article more furious and abusive than those which have preceded it, in the same journal, on American affairs, would be to make a distinction where all are eminent in wickedness. One might suppose that all the spleen of the disappointed through England, all the falsehood of all the false, were engaged in the service of that single journal.

The journal, however, is nothing. Who the reviewer may be, we know not. He may be a person whose opinions would not be thought to deserve a moment's notice in any private circle. But we fear that the utterance of such sentiments is grateful to the popular feeling in that country. We fear that they are the sentiments of a large class of its inhabitants. It is as the representative of a party that the journal can alone claim attention. Otherwise it has no significance.

As such a representative we regard it; and we ask whither this thing is tending. Is it the settled purpose of any considerable number of persons in that country to disparage this? Is it their aim to stir up ill blood between us? If such be the case, we are sorry for it. There are too many inflammable elements in each country to make it safe.

Perhaps we exaggerate the importance of these systematic attacks of the British press. In themselves considered, we certainly do not think them of any consequence; it is only as an index of the direction in which the English mind is setting, that we consider them worthy of observation: and even then possibly we overrate the evil which they can do. But we cannot help thinking that there is a world of danger in the course of our foreign relations at present, immeasurably increased by the tone of the English press; and on that account alone we make these observations respecting it.

Let us understand each other. The people of this country want nothing of the people or government of England. We are willing to exchange with them the products of our soil, and the work of our hands. We are glad to meet them in the offices of peace. Above all, we desire to participate in the advantages of every step in the arts, in science, in civilization throughout the world. But in our intercourse with Great Britain, we give as much as we receive. Certainly, we are not sensible of any benefits received, for which we should be grateful, and we feel no gratitude. If they like not our civil polity, we like theirs as little. If they are shocked at what they call the rudeness of our equality, we are not the less shocked at the servility which we see in all their classes, from the cottagers to the nobles, each crouching to and fawning upon its superior.

It is not, therefore, to obtain advantages for ourselves; it is not from admiration or fear of England, nor from any other selfish or timid motive, that we refer to the spirit which appears now to prevail in that country towards us. But we take this occasion to make some observations respecting the attitude of the two countries towards each other.

That this attitude is at present unfriendly is too apparent. Perhaps at no period since the Revolution, with the single exception of the last war, and the occurrences immediately preceding, has it been more unfriendly than it is at this moment.

Why is it so? It is not from any dislike entertained by Americans towards Englishmen. On the contrary, there are prejudices in their favor, associated with the name and history of their country, prepossessions traditional and hereditary, nurtured in childhood, promoted by the studies of youth, which the soberness and reason of maturer age cannot wholly eradicate. Their sources are obvious, and their strength has proved hitherto greater than revolution and war; bands multifold, and stronger than iron, wound about the hearts of our people. Our education, even at this day, to our regret be it spoken, is substantially English. In this, the eighth generation from the settlement of Virginia and Massachusetts, we look to England as the great mother of our learning

and our arts. From our youths upward, her books are in our hands and her songs on our lips.

Our people have always desired the sympathy of the English.—As soon as the war of the Revolution was over, notwithstanding the circumstances of atrocity with which it was carried on, we were willing to lay them

"In the deep bosom of the ocean buried;"

to shake hands across the water, and make friends. The offer was repulsed, and from that day to this England has been neither a sincere friend nor a generous enemy.

What is the reason? It is her *haughtiness and our rivalry*. She could not forget the mortification of her own defeats, and had not the magnanimity to forgive the success of her revolted colonies. Not that she had any cause for mortification or resentment. If she had been swayed by a catholic or philosophical spirit, she would have remembered that English power had been foiled in an attempt to put down English law, and that just so much as law and freedom are better than power and oppression, she should have gloried in the triumph of the first over the last. If she had regarded less the disappointment of the moment, than the permanent success of her best principles, and the spread of her laws and language, she would have rejoiced in the prodigious extension of all, by the dismemberment of the empire, and its partition into two great empires, one republican, and the other monarchical.

If there were nothing then to justify this repulsive haughtiness to us, has there been anything since? Beginning at the separation of the two countries, to which period their histories were the same, compare them from that point of divergence, to see which has done most for its own glory, and the advancement of the race. For half the period, she has been waging a furious war, to prevent the spread of revolutionary doctrines in Europe, and to maintain pretensions the most arrogant against the rights of neutral nations throughout the world. And in the intervals of European and American war, she has been warring in Asia, forcing her trade upon unwilling nations, despoiling people and princes, and interfering in the quarrels of the

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natives, to find pretexts for absorbing their possessions into her own dominions. In short, her foreign policy has been uniform, unceasing aggression upon the possessions and rights of other nations. Look now at America. Hitherto she has sought only to possess her dominions and her rights in peace; has never engaged in war, but to defend them; has proclaimed the rights of men as the only foundation and source of power; offered an asylum to the poor and oppressed of all nations; subdued the wilderness, founded cities and states, and spread her commerce through both hemispheres by the arts of peace alone.

The English have won many victories by sea and land. They have trophies taken from many nations. But have they won victories from us? On the contrary, whenever we have met them on equal terms, has not their banner been brought to the deck or to the dust? It ill becomes them, we should think, to deport themselves haughtily towards us.

Then as to our rivalry; why should that make her an enemy? Cannot rivals be friends? That is the political problem, which she must solve. We find in it no cause for alienation. We think the world is large enough for us both. Her prosperity shall not mar ours. We will labor, and build and traffic at our own free will, and she shall do the same, without let or hindrance from us; and we can walk together over the earth, befriending and assisting each other none the less. If they find it otherwise, we regret it, but we cannot help it.

We have relations with each other more and closer than any other two nations of the present or past: the same ancestry; the same language; the same laws; pursuits similar; habits of mind alike; energy and enterprise comparable only to each others. No two nations have so many means of good within their reach.

We rival each other in commerce and the arts. We push our enterprizes side by side into every branch of industry and every corner of the earth. Wherever the American or the Englishman opens any new channel of trade, the other is sure to follow. In China and the remotest East, under the equator, and within the frozen zones, the stars of America and the cross of Eng-

land, float side by side. In all lands are to be found travellers and traders, of the same tongue and lineage, under the protection of different governments. This rivalry, more than all the mishaps of the past, explains the dislike of Englishmen to everything American. It solves more problems of state than diplomacy.

Pity that it should be so. With so many motives to bring them together, and so much good capable of accomplishment by their co-operation, we cannot sufficiently regret that they should have been so alienated. He would be the greatest of benefactors, not to these nations only, but to the whole human race, who should succeed in producing a cordial sympathy and co-operation between them. The blood of America is the blood of England, mingled with and enriched by the blood of other races; the spirit and enterprize of the Englishman being tempered by the perseverance of the Dutch, the thoughtfulness of the German, and the enthusiasm of the Huguenot. English blood thus runs in a quarter of the world. Englishmen and the descendants of Englishmen predominate in the New World, in Asia, and the Southern islands. The English tongue is spoken in every zone and beneath every constellation of the sky.

But with all these motives to a cordial understanding, it is, nevertheless, certain that the alienation of the two nations is becoming every day greater. What is common between them is put out of sight; sympathy is well nigh extinguished; the waters of bitterness are swollen up and running over; they have maddened those who drink of them, till they seem ready to hunt each other up and down the world.

If our feeble voice could be heard by Englishmen, we would utter a word of warning, before it is too late. We would beg them to remember that the fiercest wars which have ever desolated the earth have been set on fire by national resentments. We would beg of them, that though we do not attach much importance to the attacks of individuals, whether writers or statesmen, yet we cannot mistake the evidence which the number, frequency, and violence of these attacks give of the present disposition of great bodies of their countrymen. For three or four years the press has been profuse

beyond example of every calumny, applied to Americans. And even while we write there has appeared a charge too gross we should have thought to be made or believed by men in their senses, that one of our national ships had been engaged in carrying slave shackles, to be used in the slave trade. If such things can be believed in England, or even spoken with the chance of being listened to, then are the people of that country ripe for a war with us, and on the verge of it.

It is at best a pitiable employment to stir up animosities, and especially between communities related to each other as theirs and ours. If by reason of conflicting interests or opposite maxims of policy, wars between us are inevitable, at least let us not add to the evils of ordinary warfare the tenfold bitterness of national revenge.

We should say to Englishmen: You are profoundly ignorant of America; you are blind to her history, her progress, her condition, and her destiny. You exaggerate your own importance, and you depreciate your adversaries; two errors, of which you will reap the fruits in your next wars. Your military resources alone would never have placed you in the front rank of nations. Your greatness was essentially and altogether maritime. Can any man tell how long even that can survive the changes that are now occurring in naval warfare?

You have indeed a noble country. God forbid that we should slander or debase it. It was the home of our ancestors, which makes it sacred. No man can look upon the unsurpassed richness of your island, its heavily-laden fields, its stately mansions, the vast commerce that fills its harbors, without doing homage to the industry that created such prodigies of wealth. But money alone is not always power. There may be a cancerous disease within, fastened upon the vitals of the state, and eating out its strength. You have in your own bosom weakness more than a counterpoise to all your power, discontented and indigent millions, whom a lost battle or a deficient harvest may turn into rebels, clamorous for bread and for their rights as men, and pulling down in their fury the pillars of the state.

But where lie the foundations of our

power? Deep in the hearts of the millions who themselves raised and now bear on their Atlantean shoulders the frame of our polity. With exhaustless territories of the most fertile soil, with energies untrammelled, free to seek their own good in their own way, competence within the reach of all, there is no task too great for our countrymen to accomplish, in a just cause and with united efforts. Unite them, once in a war with your country, exasperate them by encroaching upon their rights, and by making them believe that they are the objects of your dislike, and you will have raised up against you an enemy more formidable than Holland under the commonwealth or France under Napoleon.

Do not count upon dissensions among us. The genius of our institutions tolerates all sorts of opinions. There have been differences among us on almost all subjects, and they will doubtless continue. But the conduct of your countrymen does more than anything else to obliterate all differences of opinion respecting them. Notwithstanding the prejudices of an education favorable to you, and the innumerable ties which have hitherto drawn us towards each other, we fear that at this moment, if all America were polled, there would be a majority of voices for a war with you, and we are confident that all would desire your expulsion from the continent.

There is one subject above all others on which there can never be a difference of opinion among Americans; and that is, the introduction into the New World of the European system of intervention. The balance of power is an idea purely European. It has no place in the relations of other States. Its introduction here would at once draw us into the vortex of European politics, and would be resisted by all Americans as one man. We will meet the evil at the threshold. If force be necessary to prevent it, we will use force, and we will use it at the first moment of provocation. To hesitate would be to fall.

You may arrange your system in Europe as you choose, supervise each other's governments, cut down a state, if it be too large, or partition it, if it harbor dangerous doctrines; but your scheme of policy shall not cross the Atlantic. We form no part of your

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system. We know little of your doctrines of legitimacy, and we care less. There is, in this respect, a gulf between the New World and the Old, which you shall not pass. If you have colonies in this hemisphere, govern them as you please; but that shall not introduce you as a party into our system of independent states. Our safety forbids it.

If we were to desire an occasion for war, we can imagine none so likely to unite all our people in its support, and to arm us with the sympathy of the wise and good throughout Christendom. The detestable system of intervention, more than anything else, has repressed the liberties of Europe, and kept back the improvement of the world. It is the mightiest engine of oppression that was ever devised. It has set its iron heel upon every foot of land from Cape St. Vincent to the White Sea. Its history is written in letters of blood. Spain—distracted and impoverished Spain—is a bleeding witness against it. Italy is another; watched by Austrian spies and garrisoned by Austrian troops. Germany is half stifled by it. It has crushed Poland to death. In a war between this system and the free system of the West, between the old spirit and the new, we should enlist on our side the hand of every free man, and the prayer of every true heart, throughout Europe itself.

We wish we could indulge the expectation that our difficulties about the Oregon would be settled by peaceful methods; but we fear it may be otherwise. Appearances are threatening. The demands of England are too great; her demeanor is too haughty; and our people are exasperated. Our government cannot yield more than it has done and preserve the confidence of the people. The question of peace or war, therefore, rests with England. Be it so. War is a great calamity; but it is not the greatest.

Far from us be the wish to accelerate that event. Rather, if it were in our power, would we chain the pas-

sions that are now howling to get loose, till the moderate and wise could reconcile these unhappy disputes. We show our desire for peace by counseling compromise, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition it has received. But we fear it may be already too late. Our offers should have been accepted years ago. The dial cannot move backward. England is arming. She is doing more; she is evoking auxiliaries the terrible spirits of national jealousy and hatred.

If the territory in dispute were never so worthless, we could not allow ourselves to be pushed from it without ceremony. But it is not worthless. It commands the Pacific. The real subject of contention is the commerce of that sea. Its shores, so long occupied by semi-barbarous nations, are about to become the seats of civilization and power. The stake is a great one. A quarter of a century will find populous States along the margin of that sea. The imagination loses itself when it travels into the future, sees an active population like that which occupies America, planted there, trading with the islands, with Australia, with China, India, and perhaps Japan (for that country cannot long remain shut against strangers), and contemplates the probable consequences to the world. The increased intercourse with Eastern Asia may lead to a resurrection of the Asiatic mind. Certainly the power which shall then have been concentrated in the Pacific will make itself felt in all the concerns of men.

Let us assert our claims without needless offence. Let us show our consciousness of strength in our moderation. If we can have peace and our substantial rights, we will not take counsel of our resentments. And when war comes, if come it must, we will enter into it with the assurance that we have done everything reasonable to avert it; but with unshaken confidence that it will result in the maintenance of our rights and the discomfiture of their assailants.

D. D. F.

